

Queen's Building
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, Middlesex County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Queen's Building
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Owner: Trustees of Rutgers University

Date of Erection: 1808-1809

Architect: John Mc Comb jr.

Builder: James Chapman - mason work
Jehiel Freeman and John Voorhees - carpenter work

Present Condition: Excellent

Number of Stories: Three

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - brown stone

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch with wooden
cupola, slate

Historical Data:

Queen's College was founded in 1766 by the Dutch Reformed Church of America under a royal charter. The first charter was lost, and in 1770 George III, through William Franklin as colonial governor of the Province of New Jersey, issued a new charter which is still preserved.

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The war of the Revolution paralyzed the activities of the college leaving it practically without funds or buildings. In 1807 there was renewed activity as far as college was concerned. Through the efforts of James Parker of the Perth Amboy family, a gift of five acres was given to the college from the Parker estate.

A building committee was appointed and John Mc Comb of New York was selected as the architect; Mc Comb was one of the architects of New York City Hall. Construction began in the fall of 1808 or early in 1809; the date stone above the doorway is inscribed 1809; the cornerstone was laid on April 27, 1809. The building was not actually finished until 1825 and it cost approximately \$30,000.00. It was occupied, however, before it was completed. The east and west wings were used as living quarters for two of the professors. The central portion was used for classroom purposes; no provision was made for boarding students. The original idea was to use the building for the grammar school, for collegiate work, and also for the theological college.

Early in the nineteenth century the collegiate activities were discontinued for a time. In 1816, except for a wing occupied by one of the professors and a room for the grammar school, the building was offered to the Dutch Reformed Church of America for a theological college. Collegiate activities were to be discontinued until the Board of Trustees saw fit to resume them. For a while the property was in the possession of the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church.

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The design of Queen's Building is a monument to the ability of Mr. Mc Comb. He adhered to the best traditions of the period. It is a striking example of early American architecture, reflecting vividly the Palladian influence as interpreted by Inigo Jones and Sir William Chambers.

Bibliography:

Demarest, W.H.S. A History of Rutgers College 1766-1924 New Brunswick Publishing Company, Rutgers College, 1924

Field Book and Drawings of Survey

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Reviewed Aug. 25, '36 T.W.